

THE

HAY-FIELD.

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
THE COMMITTEE OF GENERAL LITERATURE AND EDUCATION,
APPOINTED BY THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

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Printed for the
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SOLD AT THE DEPOSITORY,
GREAT QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS;
AND 4, ROYAL EXCHANGE.
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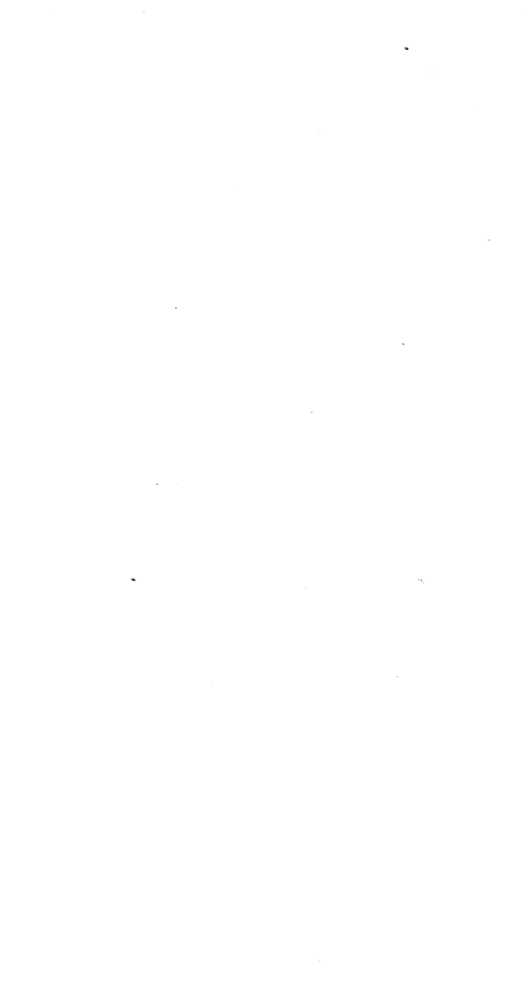
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HELEN and Eva Stanley were sitting at work, one fine summer's evening, while their mamma was reading aloud to them the History of England, when Susan, the housemaid, entered the room, and said, "If you please, ma'am, Mrs. Burke sends her compliments to you, and will be glad if you will allow the young ladies to drink tea, and spend to-morrow evening with the Miss Burkes. The grass is all cut in the meadows by the river-side, and hay-making is just going to begin; and Martha tells me, ma'am, that there will be a large party of young ladies and gentlemen; and a tent is to be put up, and the company are to sup in the hay-field, and there will be a great feast. Martha says, too—but she bid me not tell—that her mistress thinks about having the village band to play. Jones has been ordered to send a dozen dishes of strawberries; a bowl full of cream is ordered from Woodman's; and Martha is gone up to Sweet's after more cakes, and she will call for the answer as she comes back."

"Well, my dears," said Mrs. Stanley to her

little girls, as the gossiping Susan left the room, "what do you say to this invitation?"

"That we should like to go," replied both the girls.

"Then you forget what you said the last time you were visiting at Mrs. Burke's, that you never wished to go there again. That the ill manners of the young people of the family, and their quarrels and disputes with each other, rendered you quite unhappy."

"But that was in the winter, mamma," said Helen.

"Then you think that summer has improved the temper of these young ladies?"

Helen laughed. "I do not mean that, mamma; but we shall not be shut up in a room with them—we shall be in the fields."

"And we shall make hay, and sit on the hay-cocks, mamma; and that will be very pleasant," said Eva.

"And the walks by the river, in Mr. Burke's meadows, are very delightful," observed Helen.

"And then the feast, mamma!" exclaimed Eva; "to sit eating it in the tent, with music playing; will not that be very agreeable?"

"But," said Mrs. Stanley, "the bickerings and squabbings among themselves of these young people, and the consequent want of politeness to their guests—suppose they should spoil all these enjoyments?"

"I do not think they will this time, mamma," said Helen.

"Nor I neither," added Eva.

"Well, my dears," replied Mrs. Stanley, "you

must judge for yourselves. I leave you to decide as you like."

"Thank you, dear mamma; then we will go, if you please," said Helen.

"This visit," exclaimed Eva, "I think we must be happy!"

"Time will show," observed Mrs. Stanley; and Susan being desired to tell Martha that the young ladies would accept Mrs. Burke's invitation, the working and reading were resumed; but, if the truth must be told, with not quite the zest that they possessed before the invitation to Mrs. Burke's arrived; for, though the fingers mechanically performed their task, visions of hay-cocks and smiling meadows mingled in the mind with histories of Queen Elizabeth's anxiety to protect her subjects from the Spanish invasion, and thoughts of feasts, and strains of sweet music, lessened their regret for the sufferings of the unfortunate Essex.

The morning of the next day, also, was passed by the two young girls in anticipation of the pleasure they were to derive from their visit.

"We had better wear our best white muslin frocks, mamma, had we not?" inquired they of Mrs. Stanley, when dressing time arrived.

"I should think," replied she, "that others, of a commoner description, would be better adapted for the occasion."

"What! for such a party as this, mamma?" said Helen.

"I think so, indeed, my dear," answered Mrs. Stanley; "you will be chiefly out of doors; and, though it is summer-time," added she, smiling,

“you may chance to find your playfellows rather rough.”

“What! the Burkes, mamma? surely,” said Helen, in a manner that implied she had no doubt on the subject, “they will not be rude to-day.”

“And then, mamma,” said Eva, “there is to be such a large company, I think we certainly ought to wear our best dresses.”

“But are you sure,” asked Mrs. Stanley, “that there will be a large company?”

“Dear mamma!” said Eva, in a tone of surprise; “you heard what Martha told Susan.”

“Yes, I did, my dear; but——”

“But what, mamma?”

“As I said before, my little girl, time will show.”

“Then you desire us not to put on our worked frocks?” said Helen.

“Not at all so, my dear,” replied Mrs. Stanley. “I desire that you should exercise your own judgment, and wear what you think best. I have given you the benefit of a more experienced head than your own; but I wish you in this, as in many other cases, to think for yourselves; therefore, you will dress as you like. There still wants half-an-hour to the time when you are to set out, therefore you can think over this important business before you decide.”

“You are laughing at us, mamma,” said Eva, “for considering dress of so much importance; but it is very kind of you to let us do as we like, and we will think of what you have said.”

When the sisters got to their dressing-room,

they did think, and the result of their meditation was, that, though their mamma in general knew so much better than they did, and though they were generally glad to take her advice, yet in this particular instance they were the best judges, and the consultation ended in their agreeing that they ought, if it was only out of respect to Mrs. Burke and her party, to be dressed as handsomely as they could.

“ Shall I come for you at nine o’clock, young ladies?” said Susan, as she knocked at Mrs. Burke’s door, after she had attended them to the house.

“ Oh! no; not so soon as that,” exclaimed both the girls at once; “ we shall not have near done enjoying ourselves by that time, Susan. Pray, do not come till a great, great deal later.”

When Helen and Eva entered the drawing-room they found the three Miss Burkes and their brother, Stephen, assembled there, but no other guests, except Miss Manby and her brother John, a little fat boy of six years old, who, when he had nothing else to do, always sucked his thumb. It immediately appeared evident that something had occurred of an unpleasant nature to ruffle the temper of the three Miss Burkes, for they did not rise to meet their young guests, and to the kind and courteous greetings of Helen and Eva they returned no answer; but Mary Burke, the eldest girl, looking very cross, said, “ So you are come at last. I thought you were going to serve us as the others have done. You are an hour behind your time.”

Helen and Eva looked for an explanation; and

Mary, somewhat softened by the gentle expression of their countenances, proceeded to pour into their ears the secret of her and her sisters' and brother's annoyance.

"We have had nothing but excuses from all our party," said she. "The two Miss Temples sent this morning to say they have colds, and their mamma was afraid to let them come. I dare say they have no more colds than I have. I wish they may be ill, that's all."

"You do not, surely, wish that?" said Helen.

"I do, though," persisted Miss Burke. "And then the three Miss Herberts can't come, because their brother is going to school to-morrow; and Charles Herbert ——"

"Never you mind about Charles Herbert," interrupted Stephen Burke; "he is my friend, and he is nothing to you."

"But he is though," retorted his sister, "for he is, or was to have been, one of the company, and he cares no more for you than his sisters do for us."

"And the four Miss Grays," said Harriet Burke, "sent last night to tell us that their grandmother is dead, and they can't come."

"Tiresome old woman!" exclaimed Stephen; "what business had she to die just now, and spoil our party; I wish there was not an old woman in the world, I say."

"And Fanny Talbot and James Stirling, and the two boy Browns," continued Mary, "have all sent excuses."

"But there are the Walfords, they are still to come, and there are six of them, three boys and

three girls," said Kate, the youngest Miss Burke, who had been trying for some time, without success, to get in her share of the conversation; "we have heard nothing from them, and they will be sure to come; they live a good way off, and that may make them late."

With this "small speck of comfort amidst a wilderness of woe," the party, who had risen from their seats in the heat of discussion, sat down to watch for the approach of a carriage. But no sound of wheels rattling up the drive greeted the ears of the listeners.

"They never can mean to disappoint us, too!" cried Mary.

"That they never can!" echoed Harriet.

"Go and look out, Kate," said Stephen, "and see if there is anything coming up the road; you can see from the window on the landing-place, upstairs."

Kate moved rather reluctantly, but still she did go, and presently returned with a blank countenance, saying, there was nothing to be seen.

"Then we must wait on," said Stephen, surlily, and stationing himself opposite the windows that commanded a view of the carriage-drive, with his sisters around him, they all four remained, in moody silence, watching for the arrival of the "best of their company," as they, wholly regardless of the feelings of their other guests, styled the absent Walfords.

Helen and Eva cast their eyes around in search of a book, or prints, or anything that could afford rational amusement, to beguile the tedium of

waiting, but nothing of the kind was to be seen. The apartment was wholly bare of every sort of entertainment, and the two sisters had nothing to do but to look first at the surly group round the window, and then at Miss Manby, who had neither spoken nor moved from her chair since their entrance, and who looked as though nothing on earth would excite any interest in her. There she sat, immovable, with her little fat brother, John, by her side, who, with his large round eyes glazed over, was sucking his thumb, just as though the Walfords were come, and as though the Miss Burkes and Master Stephen were not disappointed of their company.

The gloomy stillness was at length broken by Stephen again ordering Kate to "go and look out;" but Kate was this time rebellious, and desired her brother to go himself.

"Get along with you, directly," shouted Stephen.

"I won't," screamed Kate, at the top of her voice.

"You shall, though," said Stephen; and, notwithstanding Kate's kicks and screams, he put her out of the room, ordering her to go upstairs instantly, and look out, or she should not come into the room again. The young lady sent forth a deafening cry, but presently recollecting that Stephen was much the strongest, and would assuredly fulfil his threat of excluding her from the company, thought it best to execute her errand, and, after allowing Stephen to leave the room three separate times to call her to come down, she descended the stairs, and bounced into the

room, calling out, "There's nobody at all coming, nor more there will be, I know; so you won't have your favourite, Master Stephen!"

"They will not come now, I dare say," said Harriet.

"I am sure they will not," again repeated Kate.

"That's what I call spite, Miss Kate!" cried Stephen.

"It is very provoking!" said Mary, her ill-humour increasing considerably as she spoke; "and such a trouble as it has all been, too, making preparations for such a large party!"

"And such a fuss and bustle as it has put every body in!" observed Harriet.

"And such an expense, too!" cried Kate. "There are the hams and the tongues, and the chickens!—and chickens are so dear now—five shillings a couple! and ma would have them, though pa said——."

"Hush!" interrupted Mary; "be quiet, will you? and don't talk of what you have no business with; you are always chattering about what you should not."

"If I am," retorted Kate, "I am not such a blab as you, Mary! You went, the other day, and told your bosom friend, as you call her, Eliza Perkins, about what ma told pa concerning the servants and the beer, and they all came up next day and gave ma warning, and ma cried, and said there was no end of the mischief you made with your tongue."

"Leave off quarrelling, girls, can't you?" cried Stephen, who just then did not want a broil. Why

don't we go out? It is no use waiting here any longer for more company."

"Go and ask mamma, then, if we may go out," said Mary.

"Do you mean me?" asked Stephen, throwing himself back into one chair, and laying his legs upon another.

"No, you are too ill-natured for that," said Mary; "do you go, Harriet."

"Not I," said Harriet. "I shall not go on your errands, I assure you!"

"I'll go to please *myself*," said Kate; "for I am tired of this;" and away she ran out of the room. After a time she returned with some trifling information about some mistake or other of the servants in preparing tea, which she communicated in an under tone to her sisters, and a tittering laugh and whispering was carried on for some time by the three girls, which Stephen tried to whistle and cough down, as he was not made a party in the amusement. This rude behaviour appeared little less disagreeable to Helen and Eva than what had preceded it. They looked from the windows at the hay-fields, and wished that they might be allowed to walk in them, but they gathered, amidst the whisperings, that tea was first to be served. After waiting full half an hour longer, the party adjourned to another room, where tea and coffee were prepared.

Mrs. Burke excused herself from appearing under the plea of a bad headache. Mr. Burke was from home, and the feeding of the young Burkes proceeded without any restraint from the presence of either parent, or the slightest check

imposed by good breeding, or any attempt to attend to the wants and wishes of others. The servants were scolded for not supplying cakes and bread and butter fast enough, and at one time a scramble ensued for a plate of macaroons, in which a cup of coffee was thrown over Sophy Manby's frock, and her little fat brother was rolled over on the floor.

At length the tedious ceremony of tea being over, the young party adjourned to the fields, and for a short time Helen and Eva enjoyed the fresh air sweetened by the fragrance of the new-mown hay, the walk in the pleasant meadows, with the beautiful river winding among them, and the cheerful sight of the haymakers at their work. Indeed, they were so well pleased, that, could they have been suffered to remain in peace, they would not have regretted the loss of the expected company, or have desired any farther amusement. But their quiet was of short duration, for the young Burkes having run over the fields like so many wild animals, overturning the hay-cocks and annoying the labourers, they returned to derive what amusement they could from their guests. Stephen rolled John Manby about in the hay till he made him cry sufficiently to cause himself a hearty laugh ; he then tried, but in a less rough style, to play with his sister Sophy ; but he might as well have attempted to extract amusement from a statue as from the impenetrable Miss Manby. Stephen would have liked to have had "some fun" with Eva Stanley, but she had such an entire dislike to any sport that bore the slightest approach to romping, that her manner of repelling

the impertinent boy's attempts at play perfectly awed him. But, though checked, his anger was roused; and, saying that it would have been very different if Emma Walford had been there, and that *she* was a nice, merry, open-hearted girl, he caught hold of little John Manby, who was standing between himself and Eva, and jumping him up into the air contrived to force the child's legs against Eva, so as to push her backwards into a hedge. Helen ran to her sister's assistance. She was not hurt, but her muslin frock was entangled in the bushes, and though Helen could have disengaged it without much damage to the frail material if she had been allowed the time, the three Miss Burkes, before they could possibly be prevented, dragged Eva forward, leaving on the thorns many a fragment of the poor girl's beautiful dress. Stephen, upon witnessing the success of his malicious trick, ran off to watch the preparations for supper.

The sight of these preparations, as the Miss Burkes watched them from a little distance, revived their clamorous lamentations on account of the absence of their expected guests.

"Is it not a shame to have such a load of good things, and nobody to eat them?" exclaimed Harriet.

"They are bringing all out!" cried Kate.

"Yes," said Mary, addressing Helen, "mamma has determined to have everything placed on table just as though all the party had come. At first she said she would get the landlord of the Red Lion to take the things off her hands at half price; but she has changed her mind; for she

wants to show what a feast was prepared, and she wants you and Eva to talk about it everywhere, and say what a fine entertainment ours was ! She doesn't care for Sophy Manby, she is such a stupid thing !—she would not have the sense to praise anything.”

“Who's blabbing, now ?” interrupted Kate.

“Mamma wishes, and so do I,” continued Mary, lowering her voice, and drawing Helen a little apart from her youngest sister—“mamma and I wish particularly that Mrs. Temple should hear of it, to shame her for the shabby affair she treated her guests with last May-day.”

“Last May-day !” repeated Helen, in a tone of surprise ; “Eva and I were there, and we thought it the pleasantest party we had been at for a long time.”

“Pleasant !” echoed Mary, in her turn, with surprise ; “I never knew anything so mean—nothing but a syllabub and cakes !”

“But there was so much to amuse,” observed Helen ; “I never saw so many beautiful books as there were there to look at ; and prints, and portfolios of drawings, and games, and puzzles, and dissected maps, and chess, and music. Eva and I could have been amused with them for a month.”

“And as to refreshments,” said Eva, “all that the children had was very nice, and such civil servants to wait on us too ; and I recollect well that there were sandwiches and wine for those who preferred them to sweets.”

“I do not recollect anything of the kind,” persisted Mary.

“But you ought though,” said Kate, who had

pushed herself again into the conference, "for you took two glasses of wine yourself when the servant handed it, and hindered me from getting any."

Mary appeared not to hear her sister, and continued : " Mrs. Temple is such a proud woman ! mamma says she is. She is always so civil to mamma, so very polite, that mamma never can say anything to her to take her down, although she wishes it so much."

Helen smiled, and said she could not think how civility could be a fault—she could not understand it.

" That's because you will not," said Mary, pettishly ; " but you must agree with me, that the Miss Temples are very disagreeable girls, so stiff and so unfriendly."

" Really," replied Helen, " I have always considered them very pleasing girls."

" You say that because you think they are like you and your sister," said Mary. " Everybody says the Miss Temples and the Miss Stanleys are very much the same sort of persons."

" Indeed !" exclaimed Helen, her eyes sparkling with pleasure ; " I am sure it is paying us a great compliment ; for I have always," she was going to have said, " thought Julia and Lucy Temple the most superior girls of our acquaintance ;" but, suddenly checking herself, out of politeness to her young hostesses, she merely said, " I think the Miss Temples very nice girls."

" So I suppose," said Mary, in evident ill-humour, " and I dare say you like them a great deal better than you do Harriet and Kate, or—or me—don't you ?"

Helen was happily relieved from the difficult task of replying to Mary's question by the approach of a servant, who came to inform them that supper was ready, and that Mrs. Burke was waiting in the tent to receive them.

Mrs. Burke was an exceedingly fine lady, and to Helen's and Eva's kind congratulations upon her being sufficiently recovered from her late indisposition to join the party, she replied in the most affected manner; and, motioning them to their places, she sank back languidly into her seat at the top of the table, apparently overcome with the effort of speaking.

In the mean time the clatter and strife of the feast were proceeding at a rapid pace with Stephen and his sisters. The servants helped the guests, and they had all made an excellent supper, when Mrs. Burke, whose indisposition had not spoiled her appetite, said, "I am sorry to see you eat nothing, Miss Stanley. I am afraid, Miss Eva, that there is nothing to your taste—I am distressed to perceive that there is not anything that you like. My sweet little friend, Sophy Manby, pray take something;—another wing of chicken? a cream?—a jelly?—Do, my love, nature requires support. I am afraid Master John," continued she, addressing the little fat boy, who was making desperate havoc in a trifle that stood before him, "I am afraid that you cannot find anything that you like. It is a very plain supper, Miss Stanley, but I only expected two or three young people to play with my children in the hay-field."

"Oh, ma!" exclaimed Stephen, "why, what a

thumper !—if we have not been disappointed of twenty !”

Mrs. Burke did not appear to hear her son, and handing down a plate of raspberries, which she had been for some time carefully mixing with cream and sugar for herself, begged that Miss Stanley would do her the favour of eating them. “I must beg,” said she, “that you will ; I am positively distressed to see you eat nothing.”

Helen, who thought it would be inconsistent with good breeding to refuse any longer, held out her hand to receive the plate, intending to taste the fruit, and then leave it ; when, at that unlucky moment, the arm of Mary, which had been stretched across the table in a struggle with Kate for a bunch of grapes that looked finer than the rest, was suddenly drawn back with the captured prize, and coming in contact with the plate of raspberries, the whole contents were emptied into Helen’s lap. Kate was too angry with her sister to perceive the accident, and Mary, “who owed Helen a grudge” for what she had said about the Miss Temples, never offered the slightest apology or assistance, or even made way for her, as she left the tent to claim from the servants such reparation of the damage as circumstances permitted. Her sister followed her, and during a short time they were alone together, they agreed how completely the ungoverned tempers of the brother and sisters had spoiled what otherwise would have been a very pleasant party.

“We cannot even enjoy this lovely prospect,” said Helen ; “for their quarrels, cast, as it were, a cloud over everything.”

“And as to their feast,” said Eva, “I have many a time enjoyed a piece of plain bread more, sitting with you, my dear sister, in peace and love under our wild-rose hedge, than I have all the dainties of their grand supper this evening.”

“What fun next, what fun next?” shouted Stephen, as he rushed from the tent, followed by his sisters. “I have eaten and drank till I can do so no more, and I want some fresh amusement.”

“What game shall we play at?” said Kate.

“I am for some quiet one,” exclaimed Stephen, as he threw himself all along on a hay-cock.

“Don’t be so lazy, Stephen; for shame!” said Mary; “do get up and spread some hay for us all to sit on.”

“Let us play at forfeits, the new game,” said Harriet; “that is a quiet amusement enough, and will suit well after supper.”

Stephen being induced to rise, the hay was spread, and the young party sat down to play; but the game proceeded very badly, owing to the incessant quarrelling of the brother and sisters.

At length Helen, quite wearied with their endless disputes, ventured to say, in a gentle manner, “If you could agree among yourselves which of you should regulate the game, and all the others promise to obey, we should get on much better.”

Helen was hardly permitted to finish her sentence, for Mary caught at the word agree, and, darting an angry glance at her, called out, “You mean to say, I suppose, that we are always quarrelling!”

“I assure you,” said Helen, “I only meant——”

“Never mind your meaning,” cried Stephen; “do be quiet, girls, and let us play!”

But Mary was not to be thus silenced; and she persisted loudly to Helen, “that she knew what she meant;” and added, “that Miss Stanley is what your friends, Julia and Lucy Temple, say of us,—they say we are always quarrelling among ourselves;—Eliza Perkins told me so, and that is the reason their mamma will hardly ever let them come and see us.”

“I do assure you,” said Helen, “that I never heard the Miss Temples speak one word against you.”

“They never speak ill of any one,” added Eva.

“Ah!” said Mary, “that’s all very fine to praise one another; but I know better. I know——”

“I tell you what, girls,” again interrupted Stephen, “if you won’t be quiet, I’m off. I thought we were here to play. Will you play, or will you not?”

Helen instantly professed her readiness to play, and something a little like system being adopted, the game went on tolerably well till it came to be decided who of the party was to impose the penalty of the forfeits, when a violent dispute arose between Stephen and Kate, each particularly wishing for the office. Neither party would give in, till at last, upon Eva’s suggestion, the point was settled by drawing lots, and the lot fell upon Stephen. The penalties imposed by him were chiefly of a disagreeable character, and accompanied by some sarcastic remark. When it came to Helen’s turn, Stephen observed that she looked so “starch and stiff,” that she must

repeat some grave sentence, and it must be, added he, a sentence suited to the occasion.

“I have given her a puzzler, I think,” said Stephen, in an undertone, winking at his sister Harriet; “it will not be very easy to find a solemn sentence adapted to a merry party.”

Now it happened, unfortunately, that, all the afternoon, a proverb of Solomon’s had been running in Helen’s head: it seemed to haunt her, and was ever hovering on her lips, and she felt quite a dread, lest, by some untoward chance, she should utter it aloud. How it happened she could not tell; whether her caution forsook her, or whether she was impelled by some strange impulse; but, upon being desired by Stephen to “repeat a grave sentence applicable to the present party,” she uttered, in an audible voice, “Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.”

No sooner had the words escaped from Helen’s lips, than she was shocked at her own want of good breeding; for, however desirable it might be that the temper and manners of her young host and hostesses should be reformed, it was not a time, when she had just been partaking of their hospitality, to utter a sentence that they could not but construe as implying a reflection upon themselves; and that, if she could ever hope to assist in bringing about a change in their characters, it must be by mild and gentle means, and not by casting a reproach on them in the midst of their boisterous mirth.

Eva regarded her amiable, and hitherto discreet, sister with surprise.

Sophy and John Manby looked as they always did.

But the young Burkes! It would be difficult to do justice to the weight of the displeasure which they poured upon Helen. They loaded her with injurious epithets; they called her, by turns, spiteful, proud, conceited, ill-natured, and rude.

They said that she had come to their party on purpose to cast reflections on them, and to insult them. They taunted her with the high opinion which they said she had of herself, and told her they knew that she thought herself far above them; in short, they were certain that she esteemed herself an angel, and looked upon them as persons wholly beneath her notice.

Helen was overwhelmed; she knew not what to do, or where to go; her attempts at apologies, and expressions of sincere regret at having offended her young friends, were lost in the din and clamour of reproach. She looked around for succour, and it was an inexpressible relief to perceive Susan enter the hay-field, and advance towards her and her sister, to attend them home.

“I hope, young ladies,” said the good-natured servant, “that you will not think that I am come for you too soon; but your mamma says the dew is beginning to fall, and she wishes you to return home now.”

Helen could not speak; but Eva told Susan they were quite ready to go, and, taking her sister by the hand, she led her into the tent, to take leave of Mrs. Burke.

The mistress of the revels had fallen into a

gentle doze amid the relics of the feast, but she gracefully roused herself to receive the farewells of her young guests. She invited them to partake of more refreshment before they departed, and pressed them all to take another glass of wine.

“Do, my dear Miss Stanley,” said she; “it will do you good, you are looking dreadfully pale! What is the matter? I am sure you are ill.”

“I am not ill, thank you,” replied Helen, “but I am feeling much distressed. I have offended your children.”

“Oh! no, my love,” replied Mrs. Burke, “that is quite impossible; I am sure you have done no such thing. My children, dear noble creatures, never take offence! They are high-spirited, but they have not a spark of ill-nature in their composition; and they are *so* attached to each other; Stephen doats on his sisters, and they all but adore him.”

“Perhaps,” said Helen to herself, as she paced silently along on her way home, “Mrs. Burke wants me to tell this also; but I cannot do it: though I have offended the sisters and brother, I cannot. I cannot utter a falsehood: even to serve Eva, I could not say what was untrue.”

As the Miss Stanleys were to pass the Manbys' house on their road home, Martha, whose business it was to see these children safe back, requested Susan to take charge of them; and they walked quietly, and without talking, by the side of Helen and Eva, whose hearts were too full to allow of conversation. When they arrived at

the Manbys' door, the two sisters were much surprised by Sophy's turning to them, and saying, "I shall never forget this day!"

"There is much to remember about it, certainly," replied Helen, "and, if we are willing, we can turn the recollection of its various events to good account."

"That is just what I was thinking," said Sophy. "Even I, stupid as people think me, can see that ill-temper and disagreeable manners will spoil the enjoyment of every pleasure."

"These children," said Eva, "have health, affluence, and indulgent parents, but they never can know what happiness is; they throw away their blessings."

"Do not," said Helen, "let us talk of their faults; let us rather meditate upon the state of our own hearts, and endeavour to avoid doing wrong. I am just now feeling strongly the necessity of keeping a strict watch over myself, and I would advise that, when the recollection of the behaviour of these children arises in our minds, instead of condemning, we should pity them, and offer up a petition to Him who has commanded us 'not to judge, lest we be judged,' that they may see how much in error they are, and change their conduct."

Sophy did not quite comprehend all that Helen had last said; but she had a feeling at her heart, as though a new light was breaking in upon her, and she said, "I like you very much, and Eva too, and I wish you would come and call on me."

The sisters promised to do so, and, saying Good night, shook hands kindly with her. They would

have shaken hands, also, with her little fat brother, John, but, as he had no cake or fruit in his mouth just then, his thumb was there, and they would not give him the trouble of taking down his hand. Sophy observed this, and, when she entered the house, she made a first attempt at imitating the gentle and amiable manners that had charmed her in the Miss Stanleys, for she drew her brother to her, and kindly told him that he ought to leave off a trick which, if continued, would render him both disagreeable and ridiculous.

Helen and Eva found their mamma waiting on the lawn, in front of the house, for their return. Their appearance was certainly very deplorable. Helen's frock was covered with red stains, and what remained of Eva's was hanging in rags from her waist; their bonnets were bent all awry, and their whole dress wore a very disordered air. But the moment that Mrs. Stanley saw the pale hue of Helen's face, she immediately divined that the spoiled dresses caused but a part of the discomfort of her daughters. Her practised eye, accustomed to read the emotions of her children's minds in their ingenuous countenances, instantly detected a deeper source of sorrow, and, kindly embracing Helen and Eva, she led them into the house, where, secure in the protection and indulgence of a mother's love, they unfolded to her every particular of their eventful day.

"And now, dear mamma," said Helen, whose delinquency, in offending the young Burkes, formed the most important part of the narration, "what do you say to my sin against good breeding?"

“What I say, my little girl, is, that I could quote a text, too,” replied Mrs. Stanley, smiling kindly on Helen, with a wish to soothe the agitation of her mind; “but would it be safe, after such a fearful result as I have just now heard resulted from so doing?”

“Dear mamma! how kind and forbearing in you not to blame me,” said Helen; “but what is your text?”

“Can you not guess?” asked Mrs. Stanley.

“I think I can,” said Eva; “and I now fully understand why you did not wish us to pay this visit at Mrs. Burke’s. Your text, mamma, is the same as Mr. Gregory preached from last Sunday?”

“You are right, my dear,” said Mrs. Stanley; “my text and Mr. Gregory’s are the same; namely, ‘Evil communications corrupt good manners.’”

THE END.

